

AMMAN, JORDAN



CENTER FOR
THE STUDY
OF Global
Christianity

GORDON  CONWELL
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



Amman, Jordan

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Cover Photo: Aerial View of buildings in Amman, Jordan | Pexels: Abdullah Ghatasheh

Unless otherwise noted, data is sourced from the *World Christian Database* and the following citation should be used: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed December 2019).

ABOUT THE CSGC

The Center for the Study of Global Christianity is an academic research center that monitors worldwide demographic trends in Christianity, including outreach and mission. We provide a comprehensive collection of information on the past, present, and future of Christianity in every country of the world. Our data and publications help churches, mission agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to be more strategic, thoughtful, and sensitive to local contexts. Please visit our website at www.globalchristianity.org.

DATA AND TERMS

This dossier includes many technical terms related to the presentation of statistics. A complete methodology document is found here: <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/center-for-global-christianity/research/dossiers>. We use a social scientific method for measuring religion around the world; namely, self-identification. If a person calls herself a Christian, then she is a Christian. We measure Christians primarily by denominational affiliation in every country of the world and these data are housed in the World Christian Database. Ethnolinguistic people groups are distinct homogeneous ethnic or racial groups within a single country, speaking its own language (one single mother tongue). These dossiers measure gospel access (also known as “evangelization”) by a number of variables, including but not limited to, evangelistic crusades, church planting, personal witnessing, sharing on social media, etc. These dossiers also utilize data from the United Nations related to socio-economic, development, and gender-justice related issues.

CONTENTS

4	Executive summary
7	Location
7	History
8	Amman today
8	Refugees
8	Peoples and languages
9	Challenges for Amman
9	Economic
11	Health
12	Politics
13	Gender
14	Religion
14	Churches and denominations
19	Analysis
21	Appendix

Features:

6	Jordan in context
10	People groups in Jordan
18	Bible translation and access in Jordan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Women at the market in Amman, Jordan.

Amman is the capital of Jordan with 4 million people, built upon rolling hills at the eastern boundary of the Ajlun Mountains, on the Wadi Amman and its tributaries. The city is known for its blend of modern and ancient life and is a major Middle Eastern cosmopolitan tourist destination. Amman is also a place of juxtaposed economic diversity, with wide gaps between its upper-class business structure, poor Jordanians migrant workers, and refugees. Over just a few decades Amman has grown from

a small market town into a teeming metropolis, largely the result of refugees fleeing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy, as indicated by its official name: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Its current king, Abdullah II, and his dynastic predecessors claim genealogical relationship to the grandfather of the Prophet Mohammad, Hashemite, and thus to Mohammad himself. As such, Islamic identity is fundamental to the politico-religious identity of the nation. Islam's relationship to political structures is complex, where law, faith, and politics are intertwined. This combination does not represent an infringement of Islamic sensibilities but rather an expression of them. There is no "separation of mosque and state" because the Kingdom and Islam are interwoven.

The relative safety and opportunities offered by Amman in the modern era (from the 19th century to present) has made it a harbor for at least four major refugee groups over the last century. Understanding this phenomenon informs many aspects of Ammani culture, history, conflict, development, and geography. Different refugee groups have integrated into Amman at various socio-economic strata over the last century. The refugee experience and thus refugee ministry is as varied as the economic disparity of the city and does not necessarily involve attachment to a particular "camp" or the conventional humanitarian modes of mission.

The survival of Christianity in a now Muslim-majority region is explained religiously by the extraordinary zeal of the Orthodox clergy and sociologically by existing tribal structures that have conditioned and stabilized the various religious allegiances. It is in fact in the villages among the farmers (fellahin) that Christianity is best preserved. Because of their historic antecedents, one finds Christians today in all strata and classes of society, except among the nomads who make up 6% of the population and, with rare exceptions, among those

JORDAN QUICK FACTS

POPULATION (2020): 10,209,000
CHRISTIANS: 129,000 (1.3%)
RELIGION: 96% MUSLIM, 2.4% AGNOSTIC
GOSPEL ACCESS: MEDIUM
PEOPLES: 20 LEAST-ACCESS: 11
DEVELOPMENT: 74 (GLOBAL AVG. 70)
GDP PER CAPITA: \$8,300 (AVG. \$15,300)
GENDER INEQUALITY: 46 (AVG. 37)

residing in Palestinian communities. The absence of Christians in these strata is due to their higher social class. Christians tend to be increasingly involved in the country's rapid urbanization and are now found principally in the merchant and office-worker middle classes and professions.

AMMAN GOVERNORATE QUICK FACTS

POPULATION: 3,953,000

CHRISTIANS: 94,900 2.4%

GOSPEL ACCESS: LOW

The dwindling Christian presence is due to many factors, including low Christian birthrates compared to Muslims. Christians have also emigrated due to economic crises created by three Palestinian wars, higher educational attainment for Christians that provide them more opportunities elsewhere, and discriminatory factors stemming from the dhimmi status enforced on non-Muslims in the country. The 21st century has been difficult for Christians in the region. Syrian Christians fled to Lebanon while Iraqi Christian refugees landed in Jordan.

The denominational diversity of churches in Amman specifically and in Jordan as a whole is vast. Churches include the Assemblies of God, Roman Catholics (Latin-Rite), Greek (Melkite) Catholics, Baptists, Nazarenes, and Seventh-day Adventists. The Greek Orthodox Church is the largest Christian denomination in Jordan with 70,000 members on the East Bank. Palestinian Arabs constitute laity and parish priests with Greeks serving as patriarchs, bishops, and monks. In the East Bank, Lutheran activities are mostly in welfare and development and are supported by the Lutheran World Federation. The Anglican Communion has two parishes in the Diocese of Jerusalem. Anglicans entered Jordan in 1860 and have 3,800 adherents on the East Bank. Redeemer Church traces its roots back house churches that began as early as 1927 from a congregation in Al-Salt, a city on the East Bank of the Jordan River about 20 miles from Amman.

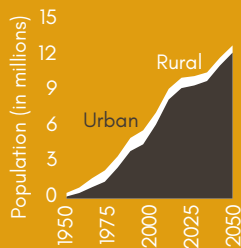
Standard Arabic is the national language but South Levantine (spoken) Arabic is the de facto working language spoken by 6.6 million people in Jordan. While there is diversity in South Levantine spoken Arabic between villages, the Ammani dialect is a newly emerging urban standard dialect. South Levantine Arabic Bible portions are available.



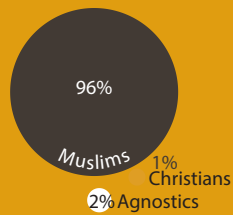
Children play on a field in Amman.

JORDAN IN CONTEXT

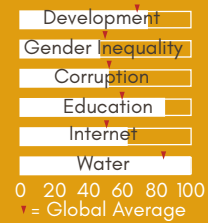
COUNTRY



population

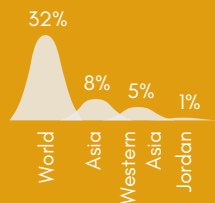


religion

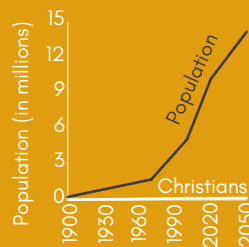


human need

CHRISTIANITY



region

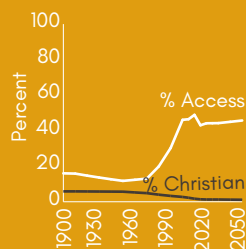


history

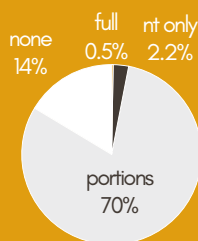


tradition

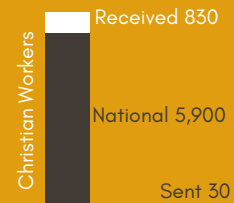
MISSION



evangelism



bible translation



personnel

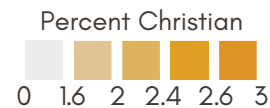
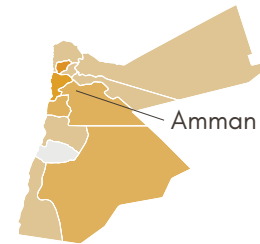
LOCATION

Amman here refers to a general locality centered on the capital of Jordan (with 2 million people in the urban area), together with surrounding areas including an additional 2 million people in the region (governorate) of the same name. The capital is built upon rolling hills at the eastern boundary of the Ajlun Mountains, on the Wadi Amman and its tributaries. The seven hills, or *jabals*, of the city more or less define specific neighborhoods. The city is known for its blend of modern and ancient life and is a major Middle Eastern cosmopolitan tourist destination. Almost half of the entire population of Jordan lives in the greater Amman area. The city is a place of juxtaposed economic diversity, with wide gaps between its upper-class business structure, poor Jordanians, migrant workers, and refugees. Over just a few decades Amman has grown from a small market town into a teeming metropolis, largely the result of refugees fleeing the neighboring Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

HISTORY

Parts of modern-day Amman overlap with the ancient capital of the Ammonites, "Rabbah of the Ammonites," mentioned in the Old Testament (Deut. 3:11, 2 Sam. 11:1; 12:26-29; 1 Chron. 20:1). Following the biblical evidence, the city is at least as old as the second millennium B.C.E. Amman has been inhabited since as early as the fourth through third millennium B.C.E. Following the birth of Solomon in the biblical account, the leader of the Davidic army (Joab) defeats the Ammonites at the city of Rabbah, making David the leader of its people, who become indentured servants to Israel. Later the city is named Philadelphia after the Egyptian King, Ptolemy II ("Philadelphus") who conquered it in the third century. As Philadelphia, modern day Amman was a part of the Roman Decapolis. It is during this period that some of the most prominent and most visited landmarks were built in Amman, including the Roman Theater, which is relatively central in the city. Surrounding the central Hashemite Plaza are the Nymphaeum (public fountain) and Odeon, which were built close to this period. In 1878, the Ottoman Empire resettled modern-day Amman with Circassian refugees from Russia, though it remained a relatively minor smattering of villages in the hilly region until after the First World War.

CHRISTIANITY IN JORDAN BY PROVINCE



Though few Christians live in Jordan, there are relatively higher concentrations in the provinces near Amman.

JORDAN TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

1916: Great Arab Revolt, overthrow of Turkish Ottoman Empire in Jordan.	1920: San Remo Conference divides the Middle East, Transjordan under British control.
1946: Transjordan recognized by the UN as an independent country.	1948: British mandate in Palestine ends in creation of Israel and invasion by Arab coalition force.
1950: West Bank and Old City of Jerusalem annexed by Jordan.	1967: Jordan loses the West Bank to Israel during Six Day War, martial law instituted.
1989: King allows first general election since martial law, despite ban on political parties.	1994: Israel and Jordan sign a peace treaty after 46 years of war.
2003: Parliamentary elections result in victory of pro-monarchy candidates, Jordan backs American-led coalition invasion of	2011: "Arab Spring" protests force King Abdullah to appoint a new Prime Minister.
2014: Jordan takes part with the US air strikes on Islamic State militants in Syria.	2012: Resignation of Prime Minister Awn al-Khasawneh.
	2017: Jordan-Iraq main border crossing reopened after two years.

Sources: Constitutionnet.org
BBC

AMMAN TODAY

REFUGEES

The relative safety and opportunities offered by Amman in the modern era (from the 19th century to present) has made it a harbor for at least four major refugee groups over the last century. Understanding this phenomenon informs many aspects of Ammani culture, history, conflict, development, and geography. Focusing on any one of these people groups would not necessarily be to attach oneself to a particular "camp" or specific humanitarian mode of mission, given the various levels of society within which different refugee groups have integrated over the last century. The whole notion of "refugee" in Amman should be reconstituted in light of the historic and contemporary reality of the city where many people at every level of society may or may not be of Jordanian heritage and yet may or may not identify as Jordanian. Amman has been a refuge and resettlement location for at least 150 years for numerous peoples displaced for a wide variety of reasons. Identity formation, social cohesion, and a sense of community separated from territoriality give many of the dispossessed communities in the Middle East the means to survive and transcend the limitations of political boundaries and geographical isolation. This adaptation to history and geography has given way to a special kind of cosmopolitanism. Palestinian youths living in camps, for example, often suggest they hold multiple identities. They are Palestinian but this native identity means little to their daily lives in Jordan. Although they do not hold formal citizenship papers, they perceive themselves as true Jordanians. Self-identification is about connectedness between people and generations. Cohesion is cultivated through the creation of placeless and timeless narratives within communities.

PEOPLES AND LANGUAGES

Standard Arabic is the national language but South Levantine (spoken) Arabic is the de facto working language spoken by 6.6 million people in Jordan. Levantine Bedawi Arabic is also spoken in the linguistic zone just northeast of Amman. There is diversity in South Levantine Spoken Arabic between villages, but the Ammani dialect is a newly emerging urban standard dialect. South Levantine is written in Arabic script and South Levantine Arabic Bible portions are available. More language research should be conducted once a people-group strategy is developed as the cosmopolitan nature of Amman and the large population of immigrants there could require other languages.

CHALLENGES FOR AMMAN

ECONOMIC

Amman is a place of juxtaposed economic diversity. Some scholars attribute the socio-economic disparity to the exponential growth of the city over the 20th century. Amman has grown from a small market town into a teeming metropolis over the course of a few decades, largely as a result of refugees fleeing the hostilities between Israelis and Palestinians. The population of Amman grew from 33,110 in 1947 to 108,000 in 1952. Between 1952 and 1963, migration from the West Bank of Jordan to the East Bank continued at an annual average of 30,000 migrants. Another 100,000 Palestinians migrated to the greater Amman area as a result of the 1967 Six-Day War.

The city's rapid growth has engendered the economic chasm that exists today, however the extant class distinction should not be regarded as a simple poor vs. rich dichotomy. Social stratification exists in two major spheres, one of which is predominantly migrant while the other is made up of Jordanian nationals and immigrants/migrants who have acquired Jordanian citizenship and been more successful in the economic sector.

The other important distinction to make in this economic divide is that despite the massive influx of Palestinians, the nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is such that persons from all classes have poured into Amman. As such, immigrants have varied results in and capacities for assimilating into the economic and social milieu of Am-

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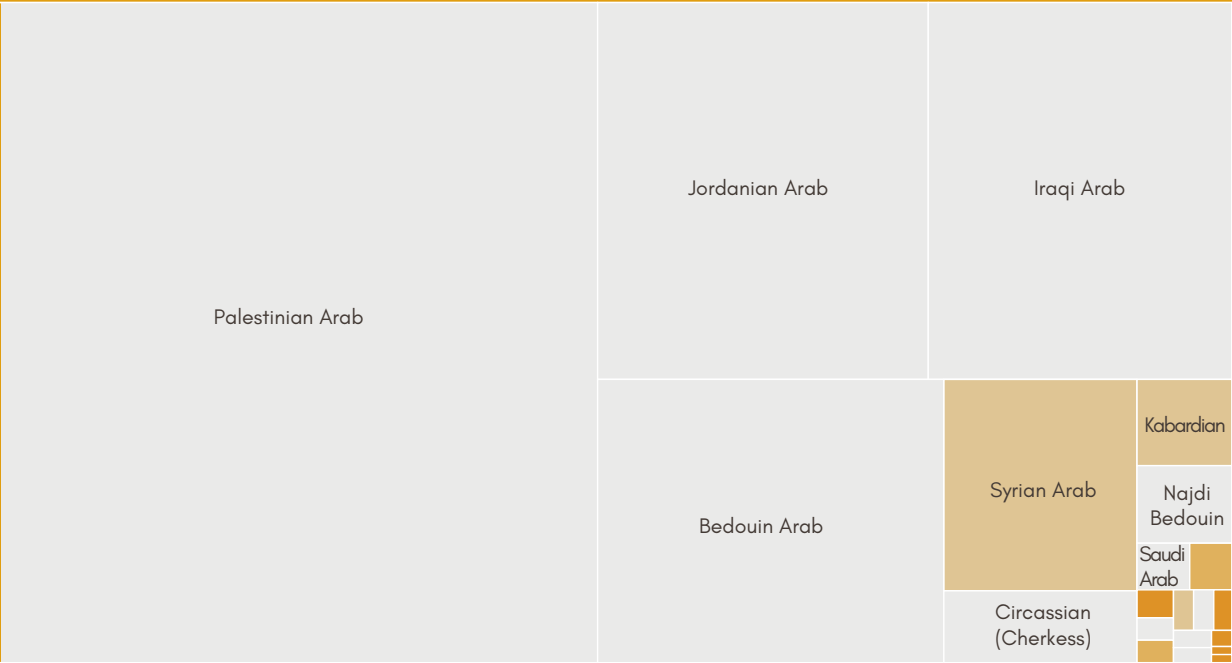


Roads and travel in the hills outside of Amman.

PEOPLE GROUPS IN JORDAN

Jordan is home to Arab peoples of several different ethnic and national backgrounds. Palestinian Arabs, for example, are the majority people group, nearing half of the total population of the country. Jordan’s diverse Arab population is partially a result of its relative stability in the region, which makes it a place of opportunity and an attractive refuge for displaced communities. The boundaries of national and ethnic identity are not always clearly defined among peoples in Jordan. Palestinian youth in refugee camps, for example, often suggest that they hold multiple identities as both Palestinian and Jordanian. Increasing cosmopolitanism and various forms of hybridity will continue to shape the political and class realities of Jordan especially in Amman.

PEOPLES OF JORDAN



People	Population	% Christian	People	Population	% Christian
1 Palestinian Arab	4,978,000	1.3%	12 Kurd	10,200	0.1%
2 Jordanian Arab	1,557,000	1.8%	13 Nuar Gypsy (Zott)	10,200	20.0%
3 Iraqi Arab	1,429,000	0.0%	14 Turkmen	10,200	0.0%
4 Bedouin Arab	1,225,000	0.0%	15 Filipino	9,200	98.0%
5 Syrian Arab	510,000	3.0%	16 Azerbaijani	8,200	0.1%
6 Circassian (Cherkess)	174,000	0.0%	17 Chechen (Shishan)	7,100	0.1%
7 Kabardian	102,000	2.0%	18 Armenian (Ermeni)	4,100	89.0%
8 Najdi Bedouin	91,900	0.0%	19 Greek	2,000	95.0%
9 Saudi Arab	30,600	0.4%	20 USA White	2,000	87.0%
10 Egyptian Arab	24,500	10.0%	other minor peoples	10,200	2.0%
11 British	12,800	74.0%			

The treemap depicts all 20 people groups in Jordan. The rectangles are proportional to the population of each people group, while the color intensity reflects the percent Christian within the people group.

Percent Christian

0 2 10 50 75 100

The whole notion of “refugee” in Amman should be reconstituted in light of the historic and contemporary reality of the city where many people at every level of society may or may not be of Jordanian heritage and yet may or may not identify as Jordanian.

man. As involuntary migrants, Palestinians in Amman have no option but to survive in the city, and this is reflected in the varied strata in which they appear in the metropolitan economy. Jordan is home to 2.1 million Palestinian refugees alone. Jordan hosts 10 UNRWA refugee camps, four of which are within the Amman metropolitan region.

HEALTH

Overall, Amman has a good health care system (for those who can afford it) and is a regional hub for “medical tourism.” However, smoking in Amman has created a large challenge for the city. Jordanians smoke not only cigarettes but shisha, the tobacco water pipe also known as hookah, that dates to the Ottoman Empire. Cigarette smoke fills many public places – including police and other governmental offices, hospitals, and schools – with hazy clouds. Jordan has the second-highest smoking prevalence in the world. A 2008 law that bans public smoking is poorly enforced given the universal struggle with tobacco addiction across all social strata (government officials, migrant workers, every social class, and both genders) but major improvements have been made since 2017. Amman is one of 54 cities in the Partnership for Healthy Cities, a network sponsored by the WHO to promote healthy urban areas worldwide and prevent deaths from noncommunicable diseases. Amman joined the partnership on the initiative of its mayor, Yousef Shawarbeh, in 2017 after failed attempts at limiting the city’s smoking problem, such as by plastering images of diseased lungs around the city and twice raising the cost of cigarettes, all to no avail. The hope is that Amman, as a major Middle Eastern city, will lead the way for a decline in the smoking culture in the Middle East.

COUNTRY RANK	LIFE EXPECTANCY	PHYSICIANS PER 1K	INFANT MORTALITY	MALARIA PER 1K	HIV PER 1K	GDP PC	NET WORTH PC	INTERNET USERS %	RELIGIOUS LIBERTY	GENDER INEQUALITY
JORDAN	75	34	13	0	1	\$8,300	\$12,200	62%	5	46
WORLD (OF 234)	135	55	103	84	122	143	135	79	189	77
ASIA (OF 51)	27	9	23	20	22	35	28	19	23	13
REGION (OF 9)	13	3	5	3	8	16	14	12	7	4

The table above depicts the value of specific UN indicators for Jordan as well as Jordan’s ranking globally, continentally and regionally against other countries. For example, Jordan ranks 27th out of 51 countries in Asia for life expectancy.

POLITICS

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy, as indicated by its official name “The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.” Its current king Abdullah II and his dynastic predecessors claim genealogical relationship to the grandfather of the Prophet Mohammad, Hashemite, and thus by extension to Mohammad himself. As such, Islamic identity is fundamental to the politico-religious identity of the nation. Islam’s relationship to political structures should be complex, where law, faith, politics, and more intertwine. This blend is not an infringement of Islamic sensibilities but rather an expression of them. There is no “separation of mosque and state” because the Kingdom and Islam are completely interwoven. At the same time, Jordan has a parliamentary system that guarantees representation of Christian communities at levels disproportionately high compared to the democratic base of the country itself, even though the power of the parliament is indeed limited.

In 2018, King Abdullah II received the Templeton Prize that distinguished him as one of the most important global religious influencers. In particular, he has been one

There is no “separation of mosque and state” in Jordan because the Kingdom and Islam are completely interwoven.



Kite flying near Amman.

“A Common Word Between Us and You” had 138 original signatories, both Christian and Muslim, when it was first developed. Since then, several hundred more signatories have been added.

of the most influential international voices in inter-faith dialogue because of his financial and ideological endorsement of the 2007 “A Common Word” document, one of the most widely signed and affirmed documents in Muslim-Christian relations. The Templeton Prize announcement cites multiple other achievements in this category, including the “Amman Message” that promotes peaceful expressions of Islam. Abdullah II heads Hashemite custodianship of Jerusalem’s sites, a historically recognized role that is very much asserted and widely recognized today. He dedicated some the Templeton Prize funds to the restoration of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian holy sites within the Transjordan and the Levant.

GENDER

Despite the shisha smoking habits of young women in Jordan and Amman, Princess Dina Mired has been a role model for women regarding public health. Mired is a global anti-cancer advocate and current President of the Union for International Cancer Control. She holds several honorary doctorates and has given many addresses at the largest international initiatives in cancer control and prevention, including the United Nations. Her position makes her not only the first woman to serve among the highest official positions in health advocacy, she is also the first



Jordanian flag flying above a city.

Arab to have such a prestigious global post. Mired serves as a powerful counter-cultural example of women’s roles, agency, influence, power, and authority in Jordan.

The cosmopolitan nature of Amman is not necessarily an indicator of its “secularization” or the “liberalization” of its Arab culture; this is one of the complexities of understanding such a large Middle Eastern city. The effects of interactions between cultures does not necessarily have the pluralizing power it does in cities. In fact, their living adjacent to one another may only reinforce traditional cultural and religious views and practices. Where in Western cities juxtaposition often leads to pluralism, it can have a polarizing effect in Amman, with little assimilation of groups into one another or into the dominant culture. In this context, it is unclear if Islam is the soil or even the seed from which gender-based violence is acceptable in Amman. Or, perhaps it is one factor among many that support traditional patriarchal views regarding female sexuality. For example, “positive” attitudes toward honor killings are more prevalent among adolescent males who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and are more inclined to subscribe to traditional patriarchal value systems that emphasize female virginity and chastity. Yet, a small proportion of adolescent girls also view honor killings as permissible and less subject to state punitive measures. The challenges to young women in Amman are at least two-fold: body image is said to be shaped by Western media, while behavioral standards still derive, in part, upon traditional patriarchal models.

RELIGION

Jordan is 96% Muslim and Amman is home to the country’s largest mosque, the King Hussein Bin Talal Mosque. Another massive mosque in the city is the King Abdullah I Mosque.

CHURCHES AND DENOMINATIONS

The denominational diversity of churches within Amman and in Jordan is vast. Churches include the Assemblies of God, Roman Catholics (Latin-Rite), Greek (Melkite) Catholics, Baptists, Nazarenes, and Seventh-day Adventists. The Greek Orthodox Church is the largest Christian denomination in Jordan with 70,000 members on the East Bank. Palestinian Arabs constitute laity and parish priests with

The challenges to young women in Amman are at least two-fold: body image is said to be shaped by Western media, while behavioral standards still derive, in part, upon traditional patriarchal models.

GENDER IN JORDAN

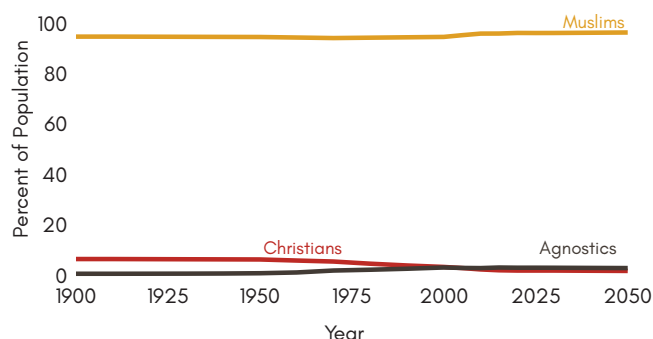
	% FEMALE	GENDER GAP	GENDER INEQUALITY
JORDAN	49	14	46
WORLD	50	8	37
ASIA	49	10	36
WESTERN ASIA	48	16	40

The table above compares key measures of gender equality against global, continental and regional averages.

Greeks serving as patriarchs, bishops, and monks. They have 34 schools in Jordan, one orphanage, and one elderly home. Muslim-background believers make up the third largest “denomination” in the country, after Orthodox and Catholics. Lutherans have seven congregations in Amman. In the East Bank their activities are mostly in welfare and development and are supported by the Lutheran World Federation, including the Schneller School of Agricultural and Manual Training, as well as a secondary school of an orphanage.

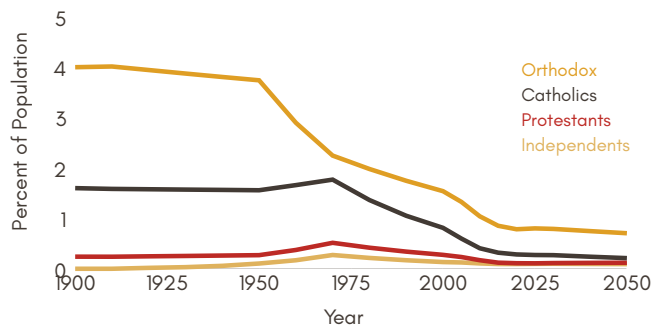
The Anglican communion has two parishes in the Diocese of Jerusalem. Anglicans entered Jordan in 1860 and have 3,800 adherents on the East Bank. Redeemer Church traces its roots back to house churches that began as early as 1927 from a congregation in Al-Salt, a city on the East Bank of the Jordan River about 20 miles from Amman. As a diocese in the worldwide Anglican communion, the network of churches of which Redeemer Church is a part (i.e., the diocese) appears to be well resourced. Anglicans are active in education with The Ahliyyah and Bishop’s Kindergarten, The Ahliyyah school for Girls, The Bishop’s School for Boys, and the Theodore Schneller School for Boys. Anglicans are also active in healthcare; the Elderly People’s Home (Amman Diocese) was established in 1961 and is a residential facility for the female elderly, providing them with safe housing and nursing care. Evangelical churches such as the Baptists, Church of the Nazarene, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance all operate schools as well.

RELIGIONS IN JORDAN, 1900-2050



Jordan has remained majority Muslim since 1900. The Christian percentage declined slowly after the arrival of Islam, and is about 1% today.

CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS IN JORDAN, 1900-2050



Though there is great diversity among Christians in Jordan, all are experiencing decline as a percentage of the population, a trend that is expected to continue.

Non-Greek Orthodox churches are also active in Jordan. The Coptic Orthodox Church is present in Abdali Amman in the East Bank. The Armenian Apostolic Church has 2,500 members. The Syrian Orthodox has 2,200 East Bank adherents grouped in one parish served by an Arab priest. There are Russian Orthodox in the West Bank in Jerusalem but have no presence east of the Jordan River. Ethiopian Orthodox also have small congregations on the West Bank in Jerusalem.

Evangelical churches, have faced resistance to their becoming official denominations in Jordan. These churches are “newcomers” to the country in contrast to the historical Orthodox and Catholic communities. Many view these newcomers as suspicious with “sheep-stealing” activities, which has indeed reflected some insensitive evangelistic attitudes toward other Christian traditions. A relatively new problem for Evangelicals is an association with Christian Zionism due to the growing political influence of American Evangelical groups that espouse such support of the modern state of Israel. Most Jordanian Evangelicals attempt to avoid association with any of these trends. This status of the Evangelical situation in Jordan has roots in the history of the development of Protestant churches and communities in Jordan that were Evangelical in nature and historically associated with British colonial power in Jerusalem. Furthermore, many of the early Protestant missionaries in the region worked to usher in the Second Coming of Christ through their evangelistic efforts toward Jews. However, many Jordanian Evangelicals do not associate with these Western Christian eschatological and theological beliefs. A lack of full government recognition of Evangelical churches is also due to their ecclesiology and relative autonomy, which, according to

Evangelicals in Jordan struggle with identification with British imperialism and Western Christian Zionism and support of the modern political State of Israel.



Memorial Church of Moses, the place where Moses was allegedly shown the Promised Land at Mount Nebo.

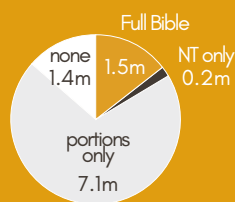
the government, makes it legally difficult to recognize these churches as a unified religious body like other religious and Christian groups that have more clear and centralized hierarchical structures of leadership.

The Ecumenical Youth Committee in Amman and the Bible Society in Jordan are the only formal interdenominational organizations in the country. Informal meetings do occur regularly in Amman between leaders of the different Christian communities in addition to the three Catholic and Orthodox bishops.

Interreligious dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims has been taking place formally since 1986 through a collaboration between the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Switzerland with the Royal Aal-Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Amman. The second major academic interreligious meeting of these two bodies was convened in Amman in November 1987 on the topics of "A Model of Historical Co-Existence between Christians and Muslims and its future prospects" and "Common Humanitarian Ideals for Muslims and Christians." The 9th meeting in November 1998 was also convened in Amman on the topic of "Muslims and Christians in Modern Society: Images of the Other and the meaning of Co-Citizenship."

BIBLE TRANSLATION AND ACCESS IN JORDAN

TRANSLATION AVAILABILITY



Availability of translation in mother tongue

Written accounts of the resurrection (portions), which took place less than 60 miles (100 km) from Amman, are available to 87% of the population of Jordan but the full context of the New Testament to only 2%, while a further 15% also have a translation of the Old Testament, recording of the history of their neighbor Israel. Most recently, in 2016 a full Bible in Mesopotamian Spoken Arabic (of Iraq) became available online, affording potential access to 1.4 million Iraqi Arabs in Jordan.

TRANSLATION NEED

The largest languages without at least a New Testament are all large spoken forms of Arabic. While a full Bible has been available in formal written Arabic from the 8th century, spoken Arabic is sufficiently different to designate as 30 separate languages. One of these has no scriptures at all and over 1 million speakers in Jordan: Levantine Bedawi Spoken Arabic (of Egypt), but 6.6 million Palestinian and Jordanian Arabs will have access when the NT is completed in South Levantine Arabic.

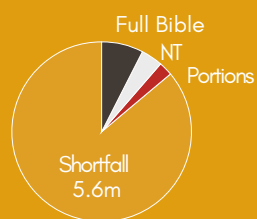
Languages in Jordan with no Bible translation

	Language	Global MTS *	Jordanian MTS*
1	South Levantine Spoken Arabic	16,183,000	6,622,000
2	Levantine Bedawi Spoken Arabic	2,486,000	1,225,000
3	North Levantine Spoken Arabic	35,451,000	510,000
4	Najdi Spoken Arabic	17,879,000	123,000
5	Domari	2,200,000	10,200
6	South Azerbaijani	20,329,000	8,200

*MTS - Mother Tongue Speakers

BIBLE DISTRIBUTION AND ACCESS

Progress towards distribution goals in Jordan



Adult Literacy: 98% Internet Users: 62%

Assuming that every literate adult should have access to at least one book of scripture, 6.6 million books would be required to be in place. Over the last 20 years (the assumed life of a book), 918,000 Bibles, New Testaments and individual books were distributed. While being a huge amount for so few Christians, non-Christians remain mostly without. How much the shortfall of 5.6 million can be made up depends on demand and increasing online availability of translations.

ANALYSIS

Amman has been described as a collection of numerous communities existing as “islands” in a sea of “others.” This ancient land and its various peoples have had substantial experience negotiating complex religious, ethnic, and cultural coexistences. Nevertheless, it is the often shared Islamic background of the many historically and contemporaneously displaced peoples in Amman that provides a scaffolding upon which many diverse peoples can remain distinct and yet unified—it has provided an assumed equilibrium between Islam and minority faiths in which the metropolis seems quite content to persist. Thus, developing a strategy to reach any particular group in Amman may not require what is popularly described as “refugee ministry” done primarily within temporary camps in tandem with humanitarian efforts to alleviate trauma and support physical and emotional needs. Rather, this kind of ministry in Amman is itself a distinct kind of people group focus in mission that should seek to understand the extent to which a refugee community has come to see itself as more or less Ammani/Jordanian—to see this place as their home nationality/ethnicity, or both, or neither. Some of the boundaries of acceptance and understanding of the Christian message will be shared across refugee groups because of their shared participation in the cosmopolitan city. However, the rules of engagement and willingness to accept those perceived as outside their community, and ways of integrating into those communities as a mission team, may largely differ between these groups despite their co-existence within a particular suburb.

Regardless of the socio-economic strata in which ministry is conducted, an effective Christian presence among Amman’s

MISSION RANK	% CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN GAIN P.A.	CHRISTIAN GROWTH %	GOSPEL ACCESS	BAPTISMS PER ANNUM	MISSIONARIES RECEIVED	CHRISTIAN BROADCAST %	PERSONAL EV (ALL)	PRIORITY PEOPLES
JORDAN	1.27%	820	2.26%	44%	5,171	220	9.50%	1m	2
WORLD (OF 234)	79	196	99	207	152	142	180	87	73
ASIA (OF 51)	19	41	34	39	37	25	20	29	33
REGION (OF 18)	12	13	7	13	13	7	7	8	10

The table above depicts the value of specific indicators of mission and Christian presence for Jordan and ranks them globally, continentally and regionally against other countries. For example, Jordan ranks 34th out of 51 countries in Asia for Christian growth.

people(s) will unravel the perplexing combination of oppressive structures which still yield shockingly positive attitudes towards the honor killings of Jordanian women who are simultaneously and increasingly subjected to both the objectifying standards of Western cultures even while the suppressive ideologies of the majority Muslim population remain.

Navigating the conflation of political and religious identity is essential to developing an effective Christian engagement in Amman. Witness which is able to show deference to the constitutional and monarchical authorities centralized in Amman (Rom. 13:1-2) while conveying the Christian message will be essential to carving out an identity which is authentically Ammani and Christian. Inasmuch as the monarch is representative of the religious views of his people, Muslims in Jordan may be comfortable acknowledging theoretical solidarity with Christians as monotheistic neighbors, without feeling a need to evaluate their own religious adherence. The historic presence of Christianity in the region means that Muslims in the area are familiar, even if only superficially, with variegated expressions of the Christian message and lifestyle and may shape their Muslim-Ammani identities upon living in proximity to Christians, under the banner of the “Amman Message” and “A Common Word” endorsed by Abdullah II. Thus, what it means to be Ammani and Muslim, notwithstanding attitudes of superiority towards other monotheistic faiths, may be rooted deeply in being Muslims who have welcomed refugees for over a century, Christians included. Rather than developing a strategy which limits its focus, and, thus, potentially its impact, to one ethnolinguistic, diaspora group sojourning indefinitely in Amman, it seems that the people of Amman constitute a unique unreached, cosmopolitan community. Christian workers should adopt the resulting spirit of pluralism that is present in the city, qualified though it is, to seek their own religious freedom as well as the religious freedom of other minority faiths in Amman and to enact their missional objectives in the incipient outlets for inter-faith dialogue within the city.

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APPENDIX

RELIGIONS OF JORDAN

	1900		1970		2000		2020		Avg. Annual Growth Rate 2000-2020	2050	
Religion	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%		Population	%
Religious	250,000	100.0	1,693,000	98.5	4,951,000	97.0	9,916,000	97.1	3.53	13,793,000	97.2
Muslims	235,000	94.1	1,608,000	93.6	4,797,000	94.0	9,758,000	95.6	3.61	13,587,000	95.8
Christians	14,600	5.8	83,400	4.9	138,000	2.7	129,000	1.3	-0.32	159,000	1.1
Orthodox	10,000	4.0	38,600	2.2	78,600	1.5	80,000	0.8	0.09	100,000	0.7
Catholics	4,000	1.6	30,400	1.8	41,400	0.8	29,000	0.3	-1.77	30,000	0.2
Protestants	600	0.2	8,900	0.5	14,100	0.3	11,200	0.1	-1.14	17,000	0.1
Independents	0	0.0	4,700	0.3	6,800	0.1	9,600	0.1	1.71	13,000	0.1
doubly-affiliated	0	0.0	0	0.0	-4,300	-0.1	-2,000	0.0	-3.73	-2,500	0.0
unaffiliated Christians	0	0.0	850	0.0	1,300	0.0	1,700	0.0	1.39	1,700	0.0
*Pentecostals/Charismatics	0	0.0	2,000	0.1	12,200	0.2	11,000	0.1	-0.50	18,000	0.1
*Evangelicals	400	0.2	5,800	0.3	8,800	0.2	8,800	0.1	-0.01	11,000	0.1
Baha'is	0	0.0	700	0.0	13,100	0.3	24,000	0.2	3.09	40,000	0.3
New religionists	100	0.0	1,200	0.1	2,600	0.1	4,700	0.0	3.10	7,000	0.0
Nonreligious	0	0.0	25,500	1.5	152,000	3.0	293,000	2.9	3.33	395,000	2.8
Agnostics	0	0.0	22,000	1.3	127,000	2.5	245,000	2.4	3.34	320,000	2.3
Atheists	0	0.0	3,500	0.2	25,200	0.5	48,000	0.5	3.27	75,000	0.5
Total population	250,000	100.0	1,719,000	100.0	5,103,000	100.0	10,209,000	100.0	3.53	14,188,000	100.0

Source: World Christian Database

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For additional information including the definition of terms and research methodology used in this document, please visit:

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